

Message Text

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AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 0631

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI BR

SUBJECT: EDNARDO CHOOSES RETIREMENT; PRESS COVERAGE, COMMENT

REF: (A) BRASILIA 0536 (B) SAO PAULO 171

SUMMARY: AS EXPECTED, EDNARDO OPTED FOR EARLY RETIREMENT AND AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING WITHDREW FROM PUBLIC VIEW. PRESS REPORTED GENERAL MILITARY APPROVAL BOTH OF GEISEL'S MOVE AND OF EDNARDO'S DECISION, BUT ONE PAPER REPORTED SIGNS OF DISGRUNTLEMENT. PRESS COMMENT PRAISED DILERMANDO AND FOR MOST PART FOUND PRESIDENTIAL ACTION HEARTENING POLITICAL OMEN, BUT NOTE OF CAUTION WAS SOUNDED. WE AGREE GEISEL AND DILERMANDO HAVE CERTAIN ADVANTAGE FOR MOMENT, BUT THEY BOTH STILL FACE PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

1. AS EXPECTED, REPLACED II ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL EDNARDO D'AVILA MELLO OPTED FOR EARLY RETIREMENT, HANDING OVER INTERIM COMMAND TO NEXT IN LINE JANUARY 20 AND WITHDRAWING AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING FROM PUBLIC VIEW. REPLACEMENT, GENERAL DILERMANDO GOMES MONTEIRO, TURNED OVER HIS FORMER JOB TO DEPUTY JANUARY 21 IN CEREMONY WHICH FEATURED EULOGY BY ARMY MINISTER FROTA, AND WILL TAKE OVER II ARMY JANUARY 23 IN CEREMONY WHICH FROTA WILL ATTEND.

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(COMMENT: BOTH EULOGY AND PRESENCE OF MINISTER AT SWEARING-

IN OF FOUR-STAR GENERAL ARE NORMAL. END COMMENT.)

2. PRESS JANUARY 21, ESPECIALLY O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO, GAVE AFFAIR VOLUMINOUS COVERAGE WHICH REFLECTED ABANDONMENT OF ANY EFFORT TO SEPARATE THE PRISONER'S DEATH FROM EDNARDO'S REMOVAL. VARIOUS COMMENTS SOUGHT TO ESTABLISH THAT EDNARDO WAS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT DEATH, AND MILITARY SOURCES IN BRASILIA WERE CITED FOR THE MOST PART AS INDICATING BOTH AGREEMENT WITH GEISEL'S ACTION AND RESPECT FOR EDNARDO'S RETIREMENT. OESTADO, HOWEVER, FOUND OFFICERS IN BOTH BRASILIA AND SAO PAULO WHO FELT THE SUDDEN REMOVAL WAS ROUGH TREATMENT FOR A FOUR-STAR, AND SUBORDINATES OF EDNARDO IN SAO PAULO WERE REPORTED AS PLANNING TO OFFER RESIGNATIONS AS EXPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY UNTIL HE TALKED THEM OUT OF IT.

3. DILERMANDO, OF COURSE, ALSO CAME IN FOR A LOT OF PRESS ATTENTION, ALL OF IT LAUDATORY AND FOCUSED ON HIS REPORTED GOOD NATURE, FEEL FOR POLITICS, AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENT. FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY IN WHICH HE TURNED OVER HIS FORMER COMMAND (AND WHICH SURPRISED REPORTERS WITH ITS INFORMALITY), HE TOLD REPORTERS THAT "HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF HUMAN PERSON COME ABOVE EVERYTHING, AND THAT HE IS OPPOSED TO "COMMUNISM, SUBVERSION, CORRUPTION, ADMINISTRATIVE IMMORALITY, VIOLENCE, AND EXCESSES WHICH INJURE ETHICS AND LAWS."

4. NOT SURPRISINGLY, A GOOD DEAL OF COMMENT FOUND THE PRESIDENTIAL ACTION A HEARTENING POLITICAL OMEN. THE FOLHA DE SAO PAULO EDITORIALIZED, "WE HAVE A PRESIDENT AGAIN," AND DECLARED "THE PRIMACY OF RESPONSIBILITY AND OF LAW HAS BEEN RE-ESTABLISHED." COLUMNIST PEDRO DANTAS HOPED THE EVENT REPRESENTED AWAKENING FROM A NIGHTMARE, WHILE O ESTADO DECLARED IN A LEAD EDITORIAL, " THE BOLD ACT OF PRESIDENT ERNESTO GEISEL MARKS A HISTORIC SITUATION: THE REVERSAL IMPOSED ON THE AVALANCHE OF BREAKDOWNS, ONE ALWAYS CALLING FORTH THE FOLLOWING AND MORE OMINOUS (ONE)." COMMENTATOR CARLOS CASTELLO BRANCO JANUARY 21 SAID THE MOVE SERVES BOTH TO WARN THE BACKERS OF TORTURE AND TO RENEW NATIONAL HOPES, BUT THE FOLLOWING DAY WARNED AGAINST "PREMATURE
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EUPHORIA" THAT WOULD ATTRIBUTE BROAD POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO GEISEL'S RESOLUTION OF AN ISOLATED PROBLEM.

5. COMMENT: IN FURTHER CONTRAST TO THE "BRIGHT-SIDE" ANALYSIS, THERE HAS ALREADY ARISEN THE IDEA (APPARENTLY ORIGINATING IN MILITARY CIRCLES) THAT THERE WILL INDEED NOW OCCUR A SLACKENING-OFF OF THE INTERNAL-SECURITY EFFORT IN SAO PAULO, FOLLOWED BY AN UPSURGE OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY

THEE WHICH WILL IN TURN REQUIRE A FURTHER REPRESSIVE
CRACK-DOWN. WE QUESTION WHETHER THE PENDULUM WILL SWING
QUITE SO FAR: NEITHER GEISEL NOR DILERMANDO IS OPPOSED TO
THE EXERCISE OF THE INTERNAL-SECURITY FUNCTION, ON TO
EXCESSES: THEY ARE, INDEED, COMMITTED TO THE STAMPING OUT
OV SUBVERSION AS A BASIC TENET AND PURPOSE OF THE REVOLUTION.
THEY HAVE AT THE MOMENT AN UNDENIABLE ADVANTAGE IN MOVING TO
BRING THE SECURITY APPARATUS UNDER CONTROL, BUT THE
RESTRAINTS THAT SO HAMPERED, INDEDD THAT MADE IMPOSSIBLE,
SUCH AN EFFORT IN THE PAST HAVE DIMINISHED, NOT DISAPPEARED.
GEISEL STILL FACES BROAD POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS,
AND STILL NEEDS TO MIND HIS RIGHT FLANK. DILERMANDO MAY
FIND THE TOUGH NUT OF THE SAO PAULO SECURITY APPARATUS NO
EASIER TO CRACK THAN DID EDNARDO, WHOSE EARLY DAYS AS II
ARMY COMMANDER SAW HIM PRAISED FOR HIS MODERATE ATTITUDE
AND EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE WITH CHURCHMEN AND
STUDENTS, END COMMENT.
CRIMMINS

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